



## **LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

9:30 a.m.

550 Jersey Avenue

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

### **Attendance**

**Present:** Baden Almonor, Ana Class-Rivera, Thomas Crane, Dawn Lystad, Jessica Tomkins, and Wanda Segarra-Cruz

**Staff & Guests:** Kevin Kurdziel, Julie Piano and Elizabeth Acosta

### **Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 am. Kevin Kurdziel initiated round table introductions.

### **Approval of Minutes October 7, 2014 meeting**

The committee members had no corrections or additions to the minutes from the October meeting. Jessica Tomkins motioned and Ana Class-Rivera second the motion for approval and they are to be filed as is.

### **Learning Link Additional Funding**

Kevin Kurdziel and Julie Piano updated the committee on the additional increase of state funds in the amount of \$110,000. This means the number of people served will be increased by 110. A full time instructor has been hired for the New Brunswick Learning Link (LL). Several classes such as ABE, High School Diploma course and basic skills are going on at once. The Learning Link has the capacity of having a basic computer literacy class in addition to what is currently being offered. Finding individuals is a task. The goal is to serve a total of 299 individuals. As of February a total of 102 customers have been served between the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy offices. The Learning Link is not subject to WIA regulations. Individuals can now stay in the Learning Link 3 – 6 months. They must have a 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade level for the high school diploma course.

The Youth lab has been converted to a computer lab for the Learning Link. The challenge is to serve 299 customers by June 30, 2015.

Funding was received to purchase new computer programs and equipment.

### **WIOA State Planning**

Kevin Kurdziel mentioned that WIOA will be implemented as of July 1, 2015. The performance measures take effect 1 year later. The state has set up 7 separate work groups in which Kevin serves on 2 of them; Career Pathways Committee & the Governance Committee. The Career Pathways is tied to high growth careers and

in demand jobs. WIOA law has no legislation changes. Will continue with a bigger connection to career pathways. There is a big push for regional planning and working with other states.

The WIB will change its name to Workforce Development Board (WDB). The size will be reduced over the next 3 years, with the majority being private sector. The mandatory partners may change.

The regulations have not been released yet. They were originally scheduled to be released in January, however it has been changed to the spring.

Data collection is a big issue. The state would like to make this more uniform throughout the state and country.

The state is looking to replace OSOS & LOOPS. This could be a multiyear project.

The state will be stricter on the eligible training provider list.

The state has a blue print website which gives information & previous webinars.

### **Job Fair**

Kevin Kurdziel announced that the department is hosting a Job Fair on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Woodbridge Community Center from 10 – 1. There are currently 70 employers registered, and all are looking to hire. There is now a waiting list.

The department is looking to host another job fair in June in Old Bridge.

### **Program Reports**

Tom Crane informed the committee that last year's criteria was met and that the state just asked to maintain attendance of the students and to manage the enrollments. This year's goals are set to improve the employment outcome and step up the data collection. The year is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way over and 1,614 clients have been served. The contract is for 1,068 individuals. Starting April 1, 2015 TASK Assessment will begin. The first two years will be the paper and pencil form until enough computers and programs are in place. Each year the tests will get harder. There are 97 graduates this year which is roughly the same as last year. Throughout the consortium a total of 131 graduated.

Baden Almonor updated the committee on WorkFirst. The WorkFirst individuals are being referred to the Learning Link (LL) to move people into programs quicker.

Ana Class-Rivera stated to the committee that the college is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> open house on April 19, 2015 from 11 – 4.

Kevin Kurdziel noted that the college is going through a Strategic Planning process and will be attending meetings to participate in the planning of new buildings at Middlesex County College.

Jessica Tomkins announced that it has been one year since their merger and all is well. She is trying to increase the level of services. Adding a citizenship program is being discussed and building up the basic literature program that is in place is currently in the works. At the end of the second quarter there were 239 active participants.

Wanda Segarra-Cruz stated that she just started with the Perth Amboy Employment Office and has implemented a policy where unemployment staff refers individuals to seek training. The object is to reach more individuals and to quickly give them the skills they require to place them back into the workforce. She has placed a visual bulletin board for individuals to obtain information and has initiated a workshop entitled "Turning Point". This workshop assists individuals in letting go of the past and to work towards a future. Participants are given a self-evaluation form on career goals to assist with helping them decide on what they would like to do at this turning point.

Dawn Lystad updated the committee with news on their new program for the Middlesex County Adult Correction Facility. A basic skills instructor went into the jails to give an HSE test to establish the skill level of those getting ready to exit so they can become more efficient and be served quickly in order to get them ready to join the workforce. Of the 8 people tested half passed. They had to take the written test because there were some internet and computer issues. Dawn will continue to work out the issues and continue to work with this population.

#### **WIB Annual Report**

Spoken about during WIOA State Planning.

#### **Miscellaneous**

Kevin Kurdziel stated that Middlesex County is unique in that student drop out lists are obtained from most of the high schools on a regular basis. Other WIBs do not receive this information. Camden & Atlantic have some cooperation.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:33am. The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 09, 2015 at 9:30am at 550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick.